

**Forest Service**

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News Release

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Forest Service Issues Permit to Survey Portions of the George Washington National Forest for Proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline

(March 17, 2015) Roanoke, Va – The Forest Service is issuing a temporary special use permit to survey a 12.6-mile segment of the George Washington National Forest for the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline in Highland and Augusta counties, VA. Surveys for wetlands, water, soil, and suitable habitat for sensitive species, including federally listed threatened and endangered plants and animals will be conducted within the next year. Surveys will also record cultural resources and invasive species.

“The information gathered from these surveys is needed for federal agencies to make informed decisions on whether or not to allow construction and operation of the proposed natural gas pipeline, and if allowed, to avoid, or reduce the impacts to sensitive resources,” explains Forest Supervisor Tom Speaks.

Many of the 7,400 comments we received on the survey permit related to concerns about the construction and operation of the proposed pipeline, rather than the surveys. “It is important to remember that allowing these survey activities does not mean we are allowing the construction of a pipeline,” reminds Speaks. We have not received additional requests for surveying National Forest System lands for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), as the lead federal agency, is currently holding public meetings and soliciting comments on the construction of the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline. FERC will conduct an in-depth environmental analysis on private and public lands, with many opportunities for public comments.

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